

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 353 207

SP 034 009

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TITLE High School Department Chairs as Instructional Leaders: Four Case Studies.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 78p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Case Studies; Collegiality; Curriculum Development; *Department Heads; High Schools; *Instructional Leadership; Leadership Responsibility; Middle Management; *Role Perception; School Administration; Secondary School Teachers; *Teacher Administrator Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Facilitative Environments; *Intermediaries

ABSTRACT

This paper presents four case studies in which high school department chairs fulfill instructional leadership roles more commonly associated with principals and assistant principals. The study explores specific instructional leadership practices and factors contributing to the establishment and fulfillment of the position; and it determines to what extent the position of department chair is perceived by chairs, principals, teachers, and other administrators and staff to be that of an instructional leader. Data were gathered by shadowing and interviewing department chairs, and by interviewing teachers, administrators, and other chairs in the building. Findings indicate that department chairs are the designated and perceived instructional leaders in their departments: they develop and coordinate curricula within their academic areas; they supervise and evaluate instruction; hire and fire teachers with administrative approval; influence school policy through regular contact with the administration; and excel as facilitators, buffers, conduits, and intermediaries between the administration and the department thereby bridging two different but related bodies in the high school environment. (Contains 37 references.) (LL)

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HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS:
FOUR CASE STUDIES

Jill A. Wettersten

Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the
American Education Research Association
San Francisco, April 1992

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to show the ways in which four high school department chairs fulfill instructional leadership roles more commonly associated with principals and assistant principals. This qualitative study suggests that the high school department chairs included in this study, not their principals, are perceived by both administrators and teachers as the instructional leaders in their respective departments. This study also suggests that factors which strongly contribute to the establishment and fulfillment of the position of these high school department chairs as instructional leaders are as follows:

1. The amount of responsibility and support given to the chair by the building principal and other members of the administrative team.
2. The credibility of the chair as a capable and trustworthy leader in the eyes of teachers in the chair's department.
3. The chair's ability to share leadership within the departments by recognizing and utilizing instructional

leadership abilities of teachers in a spirit and practice of collegiality.

4. The chair's understanding of the vision and goals of the principal and administrative team as well as those of department members and the utilization of these understandings to bridge both groups as a communicator, interpreter, and facilitator.

The latter role of the department chair, that of a "bridge" between teachers and administrators, illustrates a unique leadership role for high school department chairs who embody both teaching and administrative positions. Chairs performing in this capacity underscore the interdependence of departments and the administration within the ethos of a "loosely coupled" high school environment.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The term "instructional leadership" carries with it many meanings and ambiguities. In a broad sense, it can refer to "actions undertaken with the intention of developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for children" (Greenfield, 1987). In a narrow sense, it can

refer to lists of common personal or administrative traits or characteristics usually associated with school principals whose work has been celebrated as "effective" (Andrew, 1986; Dwyer, 1984; Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Rutherford, 1985).

Peterson (1987) suggests a more middle range view by focusing specifically on classroom instruction: "regularly observing teachers and providing feedback, monitoring student progress by reviewing tests with teachers, working with teachers to build an instructional program, promoting staff development, communicating to teachers their responsibilities for student achievement, and acting as an information node and instructional resource person by regularly discussing matters of instruction with individual teachers."

Definition of instructional leadership. Given the wide range of descriptions and concepts of instructional leadership, it is necessary to select one for the remainder of this study to give clarity and focus. Instructional leadership will refer to the coordination, supervision, and evaluation of curriculum and instruction within an academic discipline (Sergiovanni, 1984). Because this study involves high school department chairs, the definition of

instructional leadership will apply more easily to high schools rather than to elementary schools because of its emphasis on academic disciplines. Also, because the study will examine various administrative positions within the high school hierarchy, the term "instructional leader" will not be confined to the position of principal. Teachers and students as well as other administrators may share it as well. In this study, the department chair is the primary but not the single focus in terms of fulfilling the role of instructional leader.

Peterson's model (as well as countless others) specifically designates the principal as the instructional leader. The effective schools research particularly highlights the principal in this role. School reform legislation in Illinois further duplicates this concept in the form of a mandate (Ward and Hildebrand, 1988). However, even prior to the effective schools research, principals, historically, have presumed to be the instructional leaders of their schools (Greenfield, 1987).

This does not preclude that the characteristics and conditions associated with the term instructional leader can also apply to others in the school: teachers, department chairs, assistant and associate principals, and central

office personnel (Ginsberg, 1988; Greenfield, 1987; Little and Bird, 1987; Turner, 1983; Wimpelberg, 1987). The concept of delegated leadership has been evident for many years in schools, particularly where and when the principal does not have the time or expertise to personally take charge of the many responsibilities related to working with teachers in areas of curriculum, instruction, and supervision (Anderson and Nicholson, 1987; Glickman, 1991; Donmoyer and Wagstaff, 1990; Ward and Hildebrand, 1988; Ploghoft and Perkins, 1988).

Currently, literature on the topic of restructuring schools emphasizes instructional leadership based on collegiality and shared decision-making among administrators and teachers (Barth, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1989; Siskin, 1991). The principal may become not the instructional leader but the coordinator of instructional leaders (Glickman, 1991). Recently, the term "transformational leader" was recommended to replace that of "instructional leader" in order to emphasize not only shared decision-making with teachers but also teachers' own opportunities and responsibilities in administrative policy making (Brandt, 1992).

High Schools and Instructional Leadership. Differences in the structure of secondary schools and elementary schools

affect the ways in which instructional leadership functions. Secondary schools are usually larger, more complex environments than elementary schools (Peterson, 1989; Johnson, 1990). Diversity in administrative roles, many extra curricular programs, and few direct linkages between the principal and teachers in terms of supervision of instruction characterize most secondary programs (Peterson, 1989).

One of the most significant differences between secondary and elementary schools is the department system which is organized around academic disciplines (Siskin, 1991). Classrooms, department offices, and even seating patterns at faculty meetings reflect academic segregation (Siskin, 1991; Johnson, 1990; Ball, 1987; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Sergiovanni, 1984).

Departments can become "sub-cultures" of the school which provide opportunities for communication, friendship, and other means of social and political support for teachers. Yet, they may vary in terms of "closeness" or "distance" between members. Some departments are cohesive whereas others are impersonal (Johnson, 1990; Metz, 1990). Departments can develop "distinct personalities" within the school (Siskin, 1991).

The departmental system contributes to an understanding of the concept of "loose coupling" associated with school organization. According to Weick (1982), groups within schools are joined more "loosely" to each other than in other organizations. There is less monitoring of behavior of groups. There are larger spans of control which make it nearly impossible for the principal to know what every groups is doing at the same time. Consequently, there is greater autonomy among groups within schools than in other organizations.

It is not surprising that many high school principals rely on department chairs to communicate administrative policy to people in their departments and to implement school programs (Sergiovanni, 1984). Similarly, chairs are often consulted when administrators wish to know faculty opinion on various issues.

Department Chairs. The amount of research on the subject of high school department chairs is limited compared to that of high school teachers and other secondary school administrators (Siskin, 1991; Hord and Murphy, 1985).

Research studies which have focused on chairs or which have included chairs in studies of secondary school

instructional leadership reveal that the job descriptions of department chairs vary considerably. Hord and Murphy reported that chairs' responsibilities depend largely on the policies of individual school districts. According to their research, rarely were chairs given the responsibility to hire and fire or to formally evaluate teachers. More recently, studies by Johnson (1990), Kleine-Kracht and Wong (1991), and Siskin (1991) included subjects who had these additional authoritative responsibilities.

Three general areas of responsibility for department chairs are: curriculum development and implementation, supervision (in some cases, evaluation of instruction), and liaison between the administration and the teachers within the department (Sergiovanni, 1984). Chairs play a dual role of teacher and administrator (Siskin, 1991; Johnson, 1960; Hord and Murphy, 1985). Like middle management, chairs withstand pressures from the top as well as from below (Siskin, 1991). Some see themselves as teachers first and as administrators second whereas others align themselves with administrative policies (Johnson, 1990).

Potential Leadership Roles for Department Chairs.

Recent literature about the role of department chairs in school administration recommends expanding the supervisory

responsibilities of chairs in curriculum development and implementation (Costaza, Tracy, and Holmes, 1987; Greenfield, 1985; Johnson, 1990; Siskin, 1991). Chairs have the "closest" administrative relationship with teachers in their quasi-administrative role. They are in a position not only to influence curriculum and instruction within their academic areas but also to suggest ideas for school improvements beyond departmental boundaries. Teachers may turn to them as "instructional leaders" more so than to principals or assistant principals (Siskin, 1991).

The position of department head offers teachers an opportunity for teacher leadership both within the department and within the entire school if principals are willing to utilize this position in a shared decision-making capacity. Department heads can also enable teachers within their departments to assume more leadership opportunities in planning and implementing curricular ideas and in working with other teachers in peer coaching relationships or other staff improvement projects (Little, 1990; Johnson, 1990; and Siskin, 1991).

The position of department head offers great potential for encouraging teacher leadership positions outside the classroom. Sergiovanni (1984) advocates that chairs have

direct influence in affecting school policy decisions related to curriculum and instruction because of their expertise in the academic subject areas. However, practice suggests that chairs inform but not necessarily influence a principal's decisions which affect the academic areas (Hord and Murphy, 1985; Jones, 1982; Little, 1990; Marcial, 1984; Swift, 1981).

Both Johnson (1990) and Siskin (1991) raise a cautionary note. Departments can become isolated territories within the school if they are given to exclusiveness and competitiveness with other departments. This situation is characterized as a community of "fiefdoms" by Ball (1987). When this happens, students' academic experiences can become fragmented and school community relationships can deteriorate (Johnson, 1990).

Departments in secondary schools are a fundamental part of school organization and they can be used as strong administrative units (Johnson, 1990). They link themselves to the wider school community through the representation of the chair and become part of the channels of communication within the complex school environment.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study is to examine the instructional leadership roles of four selected high school department chairs who have comparable job descriptions in somewhat similar school settings.

This study will explore specific instructional leadership practices of the four high school department chairs to determine to what extent the position of department chair is perceived by chairs, principals, teachers, and other school administrators and staff to be that of an instructional leader.

The school settings for the study consist of four suburban high schools in separate districts included in a large metropolitan area in the Midwest. The school districts vary in numbers of schools in the district. One school represents a single school high school district, two schools are one of two schools in the district, and one school is one of several schools in the district. School populations range from approximately 1200 to 2800 students. Minority student representation is from approximately 6% to 15% of the student body; the largest ethnic group is Asian. Achievement test scores and academic achievement are among the highest in the area in three of the schools. One school

is slightly below the others in test scores and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status of families of students in the schools is upper middle class. Each school has extensive financial and educational support from the community. Average teacher salaries range from \$50,000 to \$58,000 per year. (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Background Information on Chairs and School Settings
April, 1991 to November, 1991

Topic	JHS	HHS	EHS	LHS
1. Number of schools in the district	2	1	2	2+
2. Student population (approximately)	1200	2700	1750	1550
3. Size of faculty	129	259	160	101
4. Total number of chairs	9	18	13	5
5. Number of years as chair	5	21	13	5
6. Chair's age range: 40-49	x			x
Chair's age range: 50-59		x	x	
7. Number of classes taught	1	1	2	0
8. Number of academic disciplines supervised	2	1	1	4
9. Number of teacher in the department(s)	21	28	14	26
10. Career department head	x	x	x	
11. Sees role as mainly administrative	x			x
12. Average age of teachers in the department	40 (fl) 48 (ss)	44	38	43

Job descriptions of each chair are similar. Each hires and fires teachers, supervises and evaluates teachers, and directs the curriculum and instruction in departments. Each chair influences general school policy as part of an advisory group of chairs which meets regularly with the

principal and administrative team. Two chairs lead single discipline departments. One is the chair of social studies and the other is the science chair. Another chair heads social studies and foreign languages and the fourth chair is in charge of English and fine arts (speech/drama, music, and art).

The study was designed to examine the position of high school department chair in a highly advantageous setting so as to maximize the potential of this position. Districts were chosen which offer chairs a great deal of administrative responsibility and support in running the instructional program in their academic areas. Financial constraints in running the instructional program are minimized and community support for academic excellence is strong.

To add to the potential of the position of department chair, each chair was selected because he or she was recommended as exemplary in his or her job. Exemplary was defined as demonstrating excellence in working with administrators and teachers, excellence in departmental leadership, and credibility as a good teacher. Each chair has at least 4 years of experience in the school as a high school department chair.

Given this relatively unrestricted setting for departmental leadership, (studying the position in as idealized and unrestrained a condition as possible) do these highly recommended chairs function as "instructional leaders"? Do they perceive themselves as instructional leaders and are they perceived as such by those who work closely with them: teachers, administrators, and other staff members? Are these chairs the primary "instructional leaders" of their academic areas? Do others share in this leadership and to what extent? If these chairs are the primary instructional leaders of their departments in curriculum, instruction, and supervision, what can be learned from them about the potential of this position as an integral part of high school administration?

The four chairs were chosen by recommendations from at least two independent sources: fellow teachers, administrators, and/or colleagues from other schools.

Four chairs, three males and one female, agreed to have me "shadow" them during the school day for 3 weeks over a several month period. Their ages ranged from early 40's to late 50's. All had Master's degrees and one had a Ph.D. Two had been chairs for 5 years, one 13 years, and one 21 years. All but one had been teachers in the district prior

to being selected as chair. Three consider themselves to be "career" chairs; one aspires to a principalship. Three chairs taught at least one class (one taught 2), one chair was released from teaching responsibilities for the past two years to take on special assignments for the district.

The field work began in the spring of 1991 and was completed in the fall of 1992. This arrangement was made in order to see the chairs during different seasonal phases of their work. Pseudonyms are used exclusively to protect the confidentiality of those who participated in the study.

Chairs were shadowed during as many of their activities during the day as possible. They were not shadowed during confidential meetings with teachers or parents where a researcher's presence would be overly obtrusive. Data were gathered by notetaking of observations of the chair's activities and by note taking of interviews with the chairs, teachers, administrators, and other chairs in the building. Teachers in the department of the chairs were interviewed based on years of teaching experience in the department, gender, responsibilities in the department, and on occasion, their distance or closeness in relationships with the chair.

Teachers, administrators, and the chairs themselves were asked to define the position of department chair as they saw it. Teachers and administrators were asked how the job of department chair impacted on their own jobs. They were also asked whether they felt the position was a necessary one in the school.

Students were not interviewed about the position of department chairs as instructional leaders. The results of a pilot study indicated that few students had more than a cursory knowledge of the position of department chair. Their contact with this position (not the person, as some had him for a teacher) was rare unless, for example, they needed his or her signature for a class change.

Written protocols were developed from field notes. Printed materials were collected such as: job descriptions, school handbooks, historical information such as school newspapers and daily bulletins; copies of school policies were made when possible. Selected statistical information was collected from each school.

Confirmation of general conclusions suggested by the data was given by both the chairs and principals during debriefing sessions prior to my departure from the schools.

Follow up confirmations of additional details were made with the chairs as needed.

Data were coded and analyzed according to established categories as comparisons were made between perceptions of people interviewed within each school as well as information collected by the "shadow". The constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis was used (Glazer 1969). A synthesis of the coded categories was developed from which generalizations were established. These generalizations are the findings of the study and will be explained fully in the following section.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study shows that the department chairs in the study are the designated and perceived instructional leaders in their departments in the school. They develop and coordinate curricula within their academic areas, supervise and evaluate instruction, and hire and fire teachers with administrative approval. In addition, the chairs in all four case studies influence school policy through regular contact with the administrative team of each school. In no case was the position of department chair considered unnecessary in the school organization.

Instructional leadership is also shared with school administrators, including some central office personnel, and with teachers. The chairs are seen as influential people in the school as well as important people within their departments. They are subject matter specialists and/or leaders of subject matter specialists.

Factors most commonly mentioned by chairs, administrators, and teachers which contribute to the success of the department chair as an instructional leader are as follows:

1. The amount of support, encouragement, and responsibility given to the chair by the principal and other members of the administrative team.

2. Credibility as a good teacher and expertise and trustworthiness as a department leader as seen by department members.

3. A willingness of the chair to share leadership in areas of curriculum, instruction, and other professional responsibilities with department members who have interests and expertise in these areas. A collegial model was practiced in all four cases.

4. Ability to "bridge" the distance between the administration and teachers in departments by understanding the needs and values of both groups and how to interpret, communicate, and facilitate them as best as possible.

Illustrations of the finding that department chairs are the instructional leaders within their academic areas, will begin with a brief description of the chairs and school settings. Each description will include characteristics of the chair's job and an explanation of how the chair fits into the school administrative hierarchy as an instructional leader. This is followed by impressions from the chairs about their jobs.

Illustrations of the four additional findings listed above will be given with quotations from subjects in each of the case studies. Comments from principals and other administrators who work with the chairs will demonstrate delegated responsibility and support which assist chairs as instructional leaders. Observations of the instructional leadership of chairs by teachers in the chairs' departments will exemplify the second finding of credibility and trust as significant components of teacher followership. Collegial relationships between teachers and chairs augment these feelings of credibility and trust which is the third

finding in the study. (Examples of administrators using collegial models are also given.) Finally, the use of terms such as "buffer", "facilitator," "middle manager", "pipeline", and "conduit" used by both administrators and teachers illustrate the fourth additional finding in the study. This is the ability of these chairs to bridge both teachers and administrators by understanding and serving the needs of each group. A complete description of all four case studies as well as additional findings will be included in a doctoral dissertation to be completed this year.

FOUR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

Jefferson High. Jefferson High is the most recently built but smaller school of the district's two high schools. It has a student population of about 1200, far less than the population of over 2000 students in the 1970s. It has a faculty of almost 130 whose average salary is about \$52,000. Students come from upper middle class families whose average income ranges between \$80,000 and 100,000 per year. Test scores are among the highest in the area and about 94% of the student body is white, non-Hispanic.

David Heintzelman is the chair of social studies and foreign languages. He is one of 9 department chairs in the

school. He is one of two chairs in the school who has responsibility for more than one academic discipline. Both social studies and foreign languages are too small to have their own department chairs. David is responsible for 21 teachers (which is about the average number of teachers for which a chair is responsible at Jefferson); 10 in social studies, and 11 in foreign languages. David has been chair for 5 years in the district. He was hired as chair from another district where he had been a chair for 5 years. He has been teaching 23 years and is in his early 40's. He currently teaches one class, an Advanced Placement history class.

David has an assistant chair in foreign languages, Michelle Nelson, a respected member of the foreign language department. The foreign language teachers wanted a department leader trained in foreign languages who could give them guidance and teaching expertise in their specific disciplines. Michelle does not evaluate teachers nor does she have administrative responsibilities. She assists David in curriculum development, instructional expertise, and communication with foreign language department members.

Of the four schools studied, this school district is the most specific in its expectations that department chairs

are part of shared leadership practices. The printed philosophy statement for evaluating chairs states that chairs will be encouraged to maintain: "clear, interactive communication and shared responsibilities; trust and mutual support; continuing professional growth; flexibility within a predictable structure; and cooperation in achieving shared goals."

The administrative team in the building consists of the principal, an associate principal, and two assistant principals. They impact on the position of department chair in specific ways. Chairs are supervised by an assistant principal or the associate principal who is assigned to work with 3 to 4 of the chairs for a three year period. The two assistant principals and the one associate principal rotate their supervision of department chairs every three years. The associate principal is the chair of the school's curriculum committee which reviews curriculum proposals. A district administrator, Harold Donnagon is the assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and professional growth. Donnagon is a highly respected and influential administrator who is also an instructional leader in the district. Chairs communicate with him on a regular basis for new ideas and information about teaching and learning

strategies as well as for information about professional growth opportunities.

The job description of department chair at Jefferson is very similar to that of the other schools in the study. Because of the similarities, the position will be described in detail only in this case study to illustrate the numerous responsibilities of the chair. Significant differences from this job description will be mentioned in the other case studies.

The position of department chair at Jefferson is divided into 5 specific roles in the job description: supervisor of instruction, supervisor of staff (within the department), curriculum development leader, building administrator, and link with the community (mostly parents). As a supervisor of instruction, the chair makes classroom visits, writes reports of these visits, communicates orally and in writing with teachers about these visits, and assesses teaching performance for the administration. After obtaining tenure, teachers at Jefferson may choose one of 15 different programs of assessment of their teaching performance or design their own. Chairs are responsible for assigning extra-curricular responsibilities to teachers in

their department and also for encouraging professional development of teachers.

As a supervisor of staff, the chair's job is to develop cohesiveness within the department, minimize conflict, share decision-making, be democratic where appropriate, and enhance communication. As a leader in curriculum development, district guidelines emphasize the needs and interests of students as well as encouragement of teacher participation in the development of curriculum both as individuals and as groups. The chair is responsible for development, organization, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum within each department. Articulation meetings with junior high feeder schools is expected. As a building administrator, the chair is an extension of the principal's administrative team and it's policies. Preparing the departmental budget, individual teachers' schedules within the department, transportation for field trips including chaperones, class coverage, assignments of staff for extra-curricular activities, interviews and evaluations of new staff, and supply lists and orders for materials are tasks specified in the job description. Chairs also handle discipline problems within their department, solve problems with parents of students in the department, and teach one

class. Chairs, as administrators, are required by the state to have an administrative certificate.

David says that chairs are considered "administration" at Jefferson. He considers much of his job to be administrative. He estimates that he spends 15-20% of his time teaching, 10-20% of his time with student council, 25-40% of his time on department matters, including supervision of instruction; and the rest, 35-40% on administration.

All chairs have special duties or administrative jobs in the building. David is involved in at least one committee assignment a year. He also runs the student council. He supervises the cafeteria once a week as an administrative responsibility. Aside from formal or regularly scheduled administrative meetings, David sees his assistant principal and the other administrators, including the principal, on almost a daily, informal basis. David likes to keep the administration informed of any special problems that may occur in his department which may impact on their offices.

An additional responsibility is interviewing and hiring staff:

"Hiring is the most important thing that I do. If I hire good, there's not much to do. If I hire bad, life becomes miserable. Our kids have high expectations. This is professions-related school. If parents don't like what's going on in their kid's classroom, the phone does not stop ringing. That is the reason you hire good people. (pause) That is really an extra consideration. You want the kids to get a good education."

David explains that the selection of a new teacher is done by a department committee. Three teachers in the department are chosen (based largely on seniority and subject areas to be considered) to serve. The other three people are the principal, the assistant principal who is currently responsible for that department, and the chair. The committee votes on the candidate. David says his vote is "one among equals".

Part of David's supervisory activities is to make sure that the departments function well.

Ninety percent of the time teachers do what they want. Teachers are happier if they make decisions. Curricula is put together by mutual agreement of the department. It is a collegial decision. There are two courses which are departmentalized. In those, we like teachers to stay within one week of each other. Scott and Hera are coordinators for these courses...The department does not like being told what to do. I make no unilateral

decisions. That's my style. Here, we hire good people and then get out of their way!

After outlining his description of the job of department chair, David reflects on his position:

It's not the demand on my time, it's the unpredictability. From light fluffy things to extremely intense things - just like that, they come without warning. In order to survive, you make that adjustment. What you tell yourself is: 'there's a solution'. Time is your ally. Don't make snap decisions. Be calm. Also, by processing it through the network, everyone will have something to add to it. There will ultimately be a solution to it.

I try to leave Fridays blank on my schedule. I have to be ready when craziness happens. I rarely close my door and you never know what will walk in!

In this district you have to be able to shift gears quickly in this job if you don't want to go crazy. You have to deal expeditiously with papers and be done with them. Get them off the desk!

David adds that the principal, Frank Allerton, looks for people who are willing to "do windows" and who have the ability to do them!

Frank takes gratification in the success of other people. As principal you instinctively trust him because he trusts you. He empowers and trusts you. He is not afraid to face tough issues. He's not defensive. He deflects criticism by being open about it. He'll listen to you and say 'let's talk about it'. He disarms people. A Pollyanna he isn't. He's always up beat. He's terrific.

Hamilton High. Hamilton High resembles Jefferson in terms of the socioeconomic status of the community, abundance of financial resources, and high test scores. Unlike Jefferson, Hamilton is a single school high school district. The student population is 2700. The faculty numbers 250. The average teacher's salary is \$58,000. Approximately 13% of the student body consists of minority students.

The school has been a prominent fixture in the community since the early 1900's. Pride in Hamilton's excellent academic tradition is evident as one walks along the hallways of the main section of the building. An honor code written over 40 years ago is displayed in one area near the administrative offices. It challenges students to maintain standards of excellence not only in academics but in conduct, moral character, and service to society.

Bill Henry is the department chair of the science department. He has 28 teachers in his department. He has been the chair for 21 years and a teacher in the district for 28 years. He distributes his time much like David Heintzelman of Jefferson. Administrative activities take about 40% of his time as opposed to supervision (30%) and teaching (25%). Bill teaches one class. He has taught

everything from A.P. classes to lower ability students. Usually he teaches whatever is "left over" after teachers give their preferences.

He considers himself to be more of a teacher than an administrator:

My goal is to be one of them (the teachers). I happen to have this responsibility rather than teaching 4 classes. They asked me to apply for the job of department chair. I didn't seek it. My biggest concern is that I have been department chair for so long. It concerns me a bit that there are other people who would apply for the job.....No teachers dislike Conrad Emerson (Social Studies chair). He is one of my favorite persons. There is freedom in that department concerning what to do in classes. They like their department head and have confidence in him in making decisions.. I try to cultivate full confidence with me and with each other. I want them to be willing to make mistakes. They can ask for advice, but no one should feel threatened. Even the physical nature of the office helps. Teachers are sitting near each other. Science people do not seem so competitive. They are team workers. This carries over to the kids.

The job responsibilities of department chair are almost identical to those of the chairs at Jefferson High. So are many of the collegial practices of the administration. For example, new teachers are hired by the administration but only with the recommendation of the chair and a team of department members who interview the top candidates. The

chairs at Hamilton receive all job applications directly from the central office personnel director who is also involved in the hiring decisions. Bill reports to the assistant principal for curriculum and instruction but also to the new principal, Lucia Bradley, who shares a strong interest in curricular ideas. Bill meets regularly with Mary Ann Williams, the assistant principal for curriculum and instruction. He also meets with the principal both individually and with a small group or "cluster" of chairs on an informal but regular basis.

Unlike at Jefferson, the central office does not regularly get involved in curriculum and instruction aside from hiring and budgetary practices. The current personnel director (32 years in education) has been involved in the hiring of almost the entire Hamilton teaching staff, the average age of which is 44 years.

There are 18 department chairs at Hamilton. Not all have large departments such as Bill's. Chairs may teach more than one class, depending on their supervisory load.

Bill likes to have a variety of teachers help select new members of the department.

This is another way to empower people within the department. It gives them a chance to use and demonstrate expertise and

leadership qualities. The school used to avoid taking a chance with people who were not proven qualities. Not unless they were 90% sure of them! Now, the administration is taking more of a chance with new people taking responsibility and becoming involved in decisions. Many felt that direction in the past was adequate. Other chairs relied on teacher leaders and members of the Faculty Council.

At Hamilton, policy-making is shared with teachers who serve on a variety of committees: budget, school facilities, long range planning, technology, curriculum, and others. Part of teachers' professional growth evaluation is based on service to the school. It is assumed that teachers will be excellent in the classroom. Merit pay is awarded if teachers are able to demonstrate teacher leadership and service aside from excellence in teaching.

Bill is a senior member of the faculty who has influence within the school beyond that of being a department head. He was on the search committee which recommended the hiring of Lucia Bradley as principal. He was appointed by the administration to a sensitive committee made up of teachers who review merit reviews of master teachers in the school. He was recently elected to represent the department heads to the Faculty Council by the faculty at large. He is among the teachers who receive the highest merit ratings in the school.

Edison High. Built in the 1950s, Edison is the older of two high schools in the district. Although each school appears to have a sense of autonomy as do the 2 schools in Jefferson's district, Edison and Bell (the other school in the district) collaborate in at least one curricular area, that of technology. Representatives from both schools meet to discuss programs and equipment which will continue to keep the district ahead of most area schools in terms of educational applications of technology. The impetus for this and several other instructional programs comes from the district's dynamic and energetic superintendent, Eliot James.

The student population is 1750 and the test scores as well as the socioeconomic status of this population are high. There are 160 faculty members. Parents in this district are upwardly mobile and students are expected to be successful in school activities as well as academics. Stress management is one of the educational services offered in an elective skills program at Edison High.

The social studies department chair, George Kennan, has been teaching in the district for 30 years. He has been the department chair for 13 years. He teaches 2 classes and is in charge of 14 department members. He is one of 13 chairs

in the school. He has special supervisory responsibilities for a skills development center which he helped design a few years ago. He has hired 8 of the 14 people on his staff. There are 13 men and one woman although an additional female is on sabbatical. George spends about 50% of his time on supervisory work. He has developed a program for advanced students who wish to do research. This is an additional supervisory responsibility for him in addition to the skills center. The remainder of his schedule is divided between teaching and administrative work. He does not have extensive committee responsibility. However, like Hamilton, teachers are assigned committee responsibilities and George recommends or "appoints" them to groups which have advisory and policy-making functions.

We are principals within our own areas. I develop my budget, I control the curriculum and staffing. Hiring and firing goes from me to the principal, Richard White, and to the Director of Personnel. I'm in control. We talk about candidates. We respect each other's opinions. We come up with good people.

This is a highly departmentalized school. Richard White (principal) gives us lots of leeway. I give teachers leeway. I'm not the smartest or most knowledgeable teacher. I find good people, put them in position, and stay out of the way. I give guidelines and we discuss them.

This is the most challenging job in the district. You straddle the line. You have administrative commitments and you are a teacher advocate. You must point out the teachers' viewpoints. You must implement administrative policies...Chairs won't let people into the department unless they want them.

Problems we have center around relations between chairs. Interdisciplinary programs are weak. If we want a new course, we go before the rest of the department chairs. They must approve it. They see if it interferes with their own clientele.

George claims he is a goal-oriented person. The district is as well. District goals have generally been presented to the schools who then establish complimentary departmental goals. Teachers and administrators also formulate individual goals which are used in evaluations of personnel. George asks his department to submit ideas for long range goals as well as yearly goals. He compiles a list and distributes it to his department. The school runs by "management by objectives" but with an emphasis on collegiality. Currently, the district is working on a project of developing a vision statement by having faculty, community members, and administrators work in small groups and come up with ideas. The ideas will be analyzed by a committee of teachers, administrators, and community members

who will synthesize them. This process developed from the superintendent's interest in collegial decision-making.

Lincoln High. Lincoln is one of several high schools in a large district. It is one of the smaller schools with a student population of 1500 and a faculty of 101. There are 5 department chairs in the school. Each is in charge of multiple departments. The five chairs, the director of student services, the director of student activities, and dean of students meet with the principal and two associate principals as part of the "administrative team" on a weekly basis.

Peg Curry, English and Fine Arts department chair, has been the chair for 5 years. A former English and speech teacher, she has been in the district for 15 years. She has been in the English and fine arts department for 6 years, having been assigned to Lincoln as a teacher and peer coach the year before she became chair. She has a Ph.D. in Educational Administration.

Peg is responsible for 26 people in her departments of English, speech and drama, art, and music. Like David Heintzelman, Peg has assistance in academic areas where she has limited expertise. One teacher who directs

the drama productions oversees speech and drama activities. A fine arts coordinator for the district who is based at Lincoln also teaches a few music classes in the department. The coordinator meets with art and music teachers separately from English teachers after general announcements at combined department meetings. Peg does the supervision and evaluation of all teachers in her combined departments. Like George Kennan, she spends 50 per cent of her time on supervisory work and the rest on administrative work. She is not currently teaching a class although all other chairs teach at Lincoln. Peg reports to the Associate Principal for Instruction, Bill Collins, who is in charge of curriculum and instruction and who is also mentoring Peg for an administrative position.

The district curriculum is coordinated by the central office. Schools are given some autonomy in developing special programs but there is also a district desire for uniformity in general course offerings. The assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and her two assistants are in the process of trying to implement an "outcomes based education" program in the district. Lincoln High and some of the other schools are frustrated by central office directives on this issue. Peg meets with English

and fine arts chairs from the other schools regularly to compare notes and share ideas. They are currently meeting to plan strategies for interpreting central office mandates to their teachers. According to Peg, the emphasis on collegiality within Lincoln High is not duplicated at the central office, a situation which occasionally creates tension and discontent between the two administrations. This form of tension is not new.

When I came to Lincoln, the district was in turmoil over reorganization. My job was to be a peer coach and to teach. I needed to establish a rapport with all teachers. The administration had never delegated responsibilities to teachers nor did the current chair in our department. Bright, gifted teachers were shown clear lines of role distinction between the faculty and administration. The chair was fired a year after I came and I was asked to take over. We got a new principal the year after I came, Carl Douglass. He said his job was to make a family out of a diverse group. He started with a person's strengths, not weaknesses. He capitalized on strengths; he placed authority close to problems. This included hiring and the budget. I felt that peer coaching helped develop a sense of community. I was able to walk, talk, and listen to teachers. I could ask questions and so could they. I got feedback and advice from those most likely to be unhappy. I gave them authority.

My job is to make the learning outcomes task as palatable as possible. Our teachers are professionals. They can evaluate their own work; they don't need me to oversee them. I want to help good teachers grow by planting good ideas and watching them develop...I am a

buffer...one of the people in the middle...I don't want the teachers to realize the problems with the central office. We have the best possible school in the district for offering us a climate where teachers are safe and valued. I would hate to leave and give up a chance to work for Carl and Bill (principal and associate principal).

The four chairs in this study share the general formal responsibilities of instructional leadership: developing, reviewing, evaluating and improving curriculum and instruction within their academic areas. In the following interviews with principals and other administrators, the chairs will be perceived as the instructional leaders of their disciplines by the administrators. Principals respect the chairs' expertise in the academic areas and do not assume responsibilities there. They also illustrate in their comments their confidence in the chairs and their support for them as instructional leaders.

1. SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPPORT: VIEWS OF PRINCIPALS
AND OTHER ADMINISTRATORS

Frank Allerton, principal, Jefferson High:

I am not the instructional leader. My survival is based on this realization. Students benefit from chairs having this responsibility. The department chairs are the 'experts in residence' of the discipline they are responsible for. This is not to say that I have wiped by hands of instruction. But, I believe we have 8 or 9 specialists in those areas. I view chairs as experts both in their areas and capable of being global administrators who can look at issues not only within the department but within the school at large.

One critical heading for all administrators, including department chairs is to be extremely skilled in working with people. Also, I discovered over the last 4 or 5 years (the length of time Allerton has been principal of Jefferson) that people want to adopt values. My values are: to treat people with respect and respect confidentiality; deal openly with each other; do what is right for the kids; provide support when it is earned - no blank checks; be direct with each other, and if we do all of these things, we will have was trust, the main value. It works.

David and others feel the same way. I didn't convince them; I didn't bring it here. My relationship with David is different than with the other chairs. There are common threads among all of us, however. More and more they demonstrate to me that they have common vision to meet our goals and in a way that excites them. It is my responsibility to appoint people and to keep these people performing at a high level.

I love the collegial model. We each take parts of the job of administration. I ask others to help me with them. Most chairs appreciate that I don't get into curriculum and instruction. I want them to be intellectually superior to me. If they are intellectually superior to me then things will look and feel differently to them than they do to me. Department chairs can be different people! If a chair has a really good idea I may say that it's his idea that we go with. Why? Because the principal is farther removed from the real action, the learning experiences, dealing with teachers on a daily basis. Teachers need ownership: not a free hand or a sense that what has been done in the past has been right! They need trust.

I think that people like that I've been a department chair, assistant principal, and other things. It gives me credibility and you avoid doing things you would do unintentionally to make them powerless.

Charles Dawes, assistant principal, Jefferson High:

The department chairs are the instructional leaders of the school. I don't pretend to be an expert in any of those field. David knows the curriculum, he does the specific supervision of teaching topics which are content specific. My observations are generalized. His tasks include staff development. This is not coming from our level. It's a fun level. He has both teaching and department chair stuff. I knock down what is in their way to do the job. They have clout as long as I believe in what they're doing. I trust them extensively...Being influential in their best interests is what I try to do.

David is in the front lines. He has specific responsibility for his own people, but others as well. Hence, he is involved in

problem solving. His goal is to help people. I want to do what is better for you. I like to make people happy. I like when there is no conflict.

Frank (principal) believes in doing good things for people. Trust is high on his list of administrative values. He goes face to face and he practices this as his way of life. It spreads. He trusts all of us. How he treats us all branches out in different directions.

Cynthia Schulman, associate principal, Jefferson High:

The chair has a tremendous amount of responsibility and also the potential to be influential. He or she is responsible for curriculum development. This is a grass roots process; the chair is not told how to do things by the district office or the administrators at the building level. The chair is in charge of the program in his or her area. The chair is the curriculum leader. Evaluation of teachers and teacher supervision is another part of their job. The chair has to be an ambassador for the subject area and a conflict resolver between teachers and students, between teachers in the department, and between teachers and other departments...

Harold Donnagon, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, Jefferson High:

The role of the chair is a mentor. I prefer that word to supervisor since it has negative connotations. The chair has several key responsibilities where he or she is empowered. Here the chair maintains a quality program by the design of the curriculum, delivery of instruction, and is responsible for inspiring, motivating, and updating teachers - whatever is necessary to make them better teachers. The chair is

expected to train teachers in the department and to provide leadership.

It is hard for me to get to the buildings to communicate. I encourage collegial, collaborative work. This encourages teachers in the buildings. I train department chairs by providing ideas in our administrative meetings. They can train their departments and provide leadership. We need specialists to get the job done.

I use the 'bubble up process'. Someone told me you can't throw out a good idea but what somebody picks it up. I like to create a few bubbles.

Lucia Bradley, principal, Hamilton High:

My role as the dominant instructional leader is unrealistic. With department heads, instructional leadership is a shared role. Governance is not always top down or bottom up. There are trends and issues going on which need to be studied. Chairs are too busy servicing departments every day. They need time to reflect as well as do teachers to maximize their potential...

Mary Ann Williams, assistant principal, Hamilton High:

To me, the job of department chair is one of the most vital roles in the school. It is the chair's responsibility to oversee what goes on in the classroom. The chair also evaluates the faculty which is another vital role. The chair notices if there is improvement in teaching as well as in the curriculum itself. The choice of department chair is a key decision.

At Hamilton, a committee of teachers select the applicants to be interviewed for department chair. Teachers

in the department and Mary Ann interview candidates and recommend a choice to the administration.

The first rule of my administration is that the people affected by a decision have an input into that decision. We are committed to people's success. We want to see them succeed. Therefore, shared responsibility is a real professional growth opportunity for teachers.

Eliot James, superintendent, Edison High district:

I believe department heads are part of the management process. As such they should identify with management not representatives of the teachers' union! During my leadership, I have tried to deal with issues of site-based management long before it became a 'buzzword'. My process is to give to the schools as much latitude as is legally possible. The efforts of the principals are to give latitude and operating room to departments as much as possible. There are relatively small things dictated from top-down. They can select their own curriculum and design their own curriculum and make internal rules within their departments short of violating the labor contract.

They are involved in the hiring process. I never pick anyone they are opposed to. I may not pick their first choice but 75% of the time they get their person. They have a lot of running room to manage their department. They also coordinate their own departmental budgets and conduct their own inservices.

I try to get the 'adrenalin pumping' by giving people some autonomy. I don't 'micro-manage' the process, I use bribery! I have

money and they don't! The risk capital fund and other kinds of funds I've appropriated...My big shtick is motivation and energy! I don't worry about anything else! Energy and vision can package a curriculum and get results! As superintendent I have two things: a bully pulpit. When you speak the system listens. It's a platform no one else has. The other thing I have is the ability to create energy within the system. Vision and risk capital for technology creates energy. I am successful in doing this. Somehow it makes a difference.

I try to keep expertise as a high order item. I want department heads to think of themselves as experts in their subject areas and to focus on substantive content. They are managers, too. We suffer here sometimes. Very good teachers may not be good managers. Intellectual stimulation will pick up the process. There are few good managers who are not provocative intellectuals. Any model will work if you can create energy.

The downside of the department system is that given the autonomy of departments, some build moats. They create fiefdoms! Departments are more prone to see issues in terms of how they will affect the department rather than the school. Some department chairs are coming around and are developing a visionary process. They have an interdepartmental emphasis; reinforcement across departmental lines. The 'princes of the castles' begin to accept confederation!

I set the overall tone. I can give guidelines but the principals and department chairs make things work. I have to sell them on the ideas!

Richard White, principal, Edison High:

The primary role of the department head is that of instructional leader. They are managers also. They are to manage the department so that it runs efficiently and effectively. The chairs also must provide the most appropriate leadership for each individual student in their department. They must keep abreast of education, providing and producing creative ideas, fostering creativity among the staff, and supporting instructional innovations among the faculty. They are 'mini-principals' of their departments. They have the responsibility of evaluating, hiring, and firing (they initiate it). The department system is the strength of our instructional program in the school but it contains divisions. Somebody gets neglected.

I want both an instructional leader and a manager. A manager will enable things to function smoothly. An instructional leader will get the best out of each person in terms of creative ideas. To do this, the chairs must have ideas themselves, different ways to improve things. They can show the staff how new ideas can work.

One of my regrets in leaving is that there is not enough interdisciplinary learning. Learning is too segmented. The department is an entity in itself. It takes over professionally and socially. Who wants to go to a school Christmas party? The department comes before the school. That's the system. Chairs go after each other's enrollments with territorial imperative. I regret that I have never gotten department chairs to work together. It's my own fault. I appoint strong people! Rather than work with someone, they would rather compete. They want to make their departments look

good. Some don't like each other. It drives me nuts! I see the total picture!

Carl Douglass, principal, Lincoln High:

I see the department head as the critical role at the high school level. He or she influences directly what happens in the classrooms in each division. There is a tremendous amount of authority and autonomy within the district guidelines. Hiring, evaluation and staff development opportunities are examples of the primary responsibilities of the department heads. They have the support of the principal and associate principals. At Lincoln we have the best people! We believe they are competent. They do not operate laissez faire. We don't turn them loose. We have guidelines with broad expectations: treat each other with dignity, with respect. If this is violated, we know about it immediately from students and families. They make the student the primary focus of any decision that they make. Department heads also need to be there for their staff members for whatever hours are needed to get the job done. They may be needed on weekends to give support for those who need it. 'Nine to five' employees would have a hard time working for me.

Bill Collins, associate principal for instruction.

Lincoln High:

The division head is the most abused position we have. Outside of this building's atmosphere, there is a callous attitude towards them. They are viewed as foremen on an assembly line. There is not that much more pay but they are supposed to keep all of their teachers in line. They are not one of us or one of them (teachers). They can't supervise without contact. It's like a car wash! The most important administrative persons other than the principal are the

heads. They are the principal persons for that group of people in the department. The responsibilities of the principal and the division heads are parallel. They have exactly the same rhythm and direction although one is more contained than the other. The division heads set climate, supervise teachers, and serve their needs. The job is too broad for the principal to handle all subjects. The job is too broad for division heads to handle two subjects!

The principal is to an elementary school what a division head is to a high school department. Everything in between, deans, student services, etc., is to serve students. The latter are a service structure. The heads manage the department as the principal manages the school.

Principals and administrators in this study delegated responsibilities for instructional leadership to their chairs. They gave them autonomy with which to make decisions with their departments about curriculum, instruction, and department issues. This suggests confidence and trust in the chairs instructional leadership abilities and it indicates support for the chairs' leadership.

To assist chairs in their tasks of communicating with both administrators and teachers, this study indicates that the chairs receive the support of both groups. Delegated responsibility and support by the principal and other

members of the administrative team assists chairs in carrying out their responsibilities as instructional leaders. Credibility as an effective teacher and manager as well as trustworthiness as an instructional leader leads to the support of the chair by his or her own department members.

2. SUPPORT THROUGH CREDIBILITY AND TRUST: TEACHERS' VIEWS OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Jefferson High Teachers. Thirteen teachers from the social studies and foreign language departments were interviewed for this study. Seven were from the social studies department (2 women, 5 men); six were from the foreign language department (5 women, 1 man). Three teachers had over 20 years of teaching experience at Jefferson, 5 had between 10 and 15 years of teaching experience at Jefferson, and 5 had between 1 and 5 years of teaching experience in the school. Included in the sample were specific teachers whom David recommended for interviews. Also included were three teachers who had been critical of David's leadership in the past.

Hera Brown (social studies). 15 years experience:

The chair here is an administrator. He is a facilitator and he provides guidance, ideas, and leadership. The chair is also someone who is supportive. Someone you can bounce ideas off it. David is a history person and as such he is a resource person. He is collegial, empathetic, understanding, and we can have a sharing of experiences. As an administrator, he plays a different role. He sees things more objectively. He tends to see the big picture. He's outside of it.

Michelle Nelson (foreign languages assistant chair). 10

years experience:

The chair must exert leadership. The chair helps groups come together, clarifies values for the group such as mission statements (which we don't). The chair helps teachers decide on goals for the department and brings innovations to the department. We need more high tech in foreign languages. We need a kick in the seat to get us going as well as to provide the resources for us to get going on it.!

Hamilton High teachers. Thirteen teachers in Bill's department were interviewed. They ranged in years of teaching experience at Hamilton from 1 to 35 years. One was female, the others male. They ranged in familiarity to Bill from close friends to an "outsider" in the department. The most often mentioned descriptors of the position of department chair at Hamilton as fulfilled by Bill were: provider of vision, manager, supporter of new ideas in

curriculum, guide in personal growth and development, and advocate for teachers in the department.

David Freeman (Science). 26 years experience:

I've known three department chairs who carry out their jobs differently. In general, they are responsible for the budget, getting as many sections as they can of classes, and handle complaints from parents. All work with the master schedule, including deciding who teaches what. Not all chairs have taken part in evaluation.

I'm not sure about the restructuring from above, but Bill gets people to think about reform and change. He tries to revitalize teaching strategies. There are new goals for science today. I see a lot of that with Bill. He, himself, is a reformer. He encouraged a lot of movement. People are doing professional growth. They are getting fellowships, talking and thinking about reforms in science. I have been encouraged to do a lot more reflection. He himself is not inherently that way. This should be a function of the department chairs. It was never stressed by my other department heads. A sense of vision is important - how we should be teaching. Within the department (not the school), there is an on going tradition of respecting what everyone does well and not forcing one's view on another. Yet, you can open up possibilities.

Edison High Teachers. Eleven teachers in George's department were interviewed; 10 men and one woman. They ranged from a first year teacher to one with 26 years of experience in the district. The most commonly mentioned

descriptors of the position were: middle management, manager, teacher advocate, liaison, and supporter of staff.

Chevron Jones (social studies). 2 years experience:

The job of the chair is to be a leader for the department, to speak for your department. The real image is that 'we have it together'. Other people see how organized it is (in our department) and they kind of ponder that. The chair has impact. Social studies is known as a nice department. That's nice to know. The kids feel that way. We have a different collection of personalities and run a wide range of political discussions. In my job interview here, George was proud of his department and how strong it was. I thought it must be good! What I like about George is that his door is open. For a first year teacher last year that was important to me. I have had extensive conferences and he knows what is happening. I had some unreasonable parents last year and I liked how George supported me. He lets them be heard but he backs the teachers!

Allen Wood (social studies). 14 years experience:

Chairs, to me, have two roles: curriculum leader and petty bureaucrat. The curriculum leader inspires teachers to research and enrich themselves academically and makes it possible for teachers to convey what they want to convey. Chairs need to support academic interests of teachers and what teachers wish to accomplish. As petty bureaucrats, chairs do the bidding of higher powers. There is so much attention paid to ridiculously unimportant minutia, administtrivia...The task of department head is to be a curriculum leader at Edison and the curriculum's greatest strength is shown through its teachers!

Lincoln High Teachers. Eighteen teachers in Peg's department were interviewed. They represented all subject areas within the multiple departments: art (1), music (1), speech (2), and English (14). Eleven teachers had over 20 years of teaching experience. The remaining seven had from 1 to 15 years of experience. Nine were female; ten were male.

Rev Ward (English). 26 years experience:

The department chair 'makes the wheels move'. She has an arm on the curriculum, a handle on the talents of the staff, and where they are best served. She handles the logistics such as materials, rooms, etc. - everything from the physical to the intellectual. The chair sets the morale of the department. A good chair has a knack for reflective listening. She knows what you are doing. One month later there is not a big gap. She knows right where you are. She's right there with you. She is able to ask you those questions to get you to where you need to be. This is a function of intelligence. They are terrific problem solvers. Peg can leave you with 5 or 6 ideas to 'chew on' and play with.

Chairs are resource persons. With the budget, good chairs can squeeze out extra money with the help of the administration. Our program operates well because of Peg. Peg gives us freedom. She trusts us and is non-judgmental. She asks, "What can I do to help?" She will touch back with you and ask how things worked. If things aren't working, she will say, "What would you like to do now to change things?" Mistakes are never a personal defeat. You are not blamed for things that did not work out. This is part of her background in peer coaching.

Peg has high standards. Working with Peg means that you give 150%. She expects excellence. You wouldn't be in her department and slough off. My guess is that she would come in and talk about it if things weren't happening!

Donna Brown (English). 12 years experience.

The department chair is the instructional leader of the department, the same as the principal. The principal sets the tone for the school, the chair for the department. The chair is the "glue" which keeps the department together. The chair sets the guidelines for the direction of the curriculum and is a substantial role model for implementing teaching techniques. She must be well trained and up to date to be there for teachers to go to. When she is removed from the classroom experience as a teacher, it is more difficult to implement this in a sense of having true authority. It is important for the chair to teach for the sake of credibility.

Peg has a genuine caring for people which reflects Carl's influence. People are important. This is what the administration respects. I am grateful to be part of the decision-making in hiring new people. I voiced my appreciation to be allowed to have input into this. You are recognized as being important. You are comfortable with these people. You realize that they are taking care of your needs. We also have input into the scheduling of classes. We feel part of the process.

Credibility and trust are shared values within the departments of these chairs. They are enhanced when the spirit and practice of collegiality is demonstrated between

the chairs and department members. The following comments from teachers within the departments of the chairs will illustrate their perceptions and support of the chair's leadership practices.

3. SHARED LEADERSHIP AND COLLEGIALLY: TEACHERS' VIEWS

Jefferson High teachers. Louise Abano (social studies). 27 years experience:

In curriculum leadership the chair can push you further such as encouraging you to try new things. David does this. Harold Donnagon, the assistant superintendent, is the best in the state! He tells us to 'go invent this, develop that'. At the teacher and department chair level, ideas can be invented and field tested. Programs are often 'home grown'.

Hera Brown (social studies). 15 years experience:

The district has been wonderful. Teachers understand and assume responsibility. Here, we are all professionals. David is not too distanced that he can't understand needs and he believes that teachers can be trusted. In another district there are teachers who cannot come to our A.P. consortium meetings every 6 weeks because their chairs won't let them out of the building. The chair won't let 2 teachers go together. They must take turns. The pettiness of some chairs. It's like saying, 'I'm the chair, I'll decide what's good for you'. David allows autonomy. The payoff for going to these meetings is terrific. It affects the vitality of the teacher and it's terrific for the kids.

Teachers can share their knowledge with them. The district benefits. David understands that.

The most common issue for the foreign language teachers was the position of Michelle as assistant chair. They were overwhelmingly pleased to have her in an advisory leadership position within the department. Each teacher mentioned her new role with great support.

Roberta Harris (foreign languages). 7 years of experience:

I see the department chair position as a personnel issue. The chair deals with person problems of people in the department, problems with students and the department. The addition of Michelle as assistant chair - right on the battleground - is a real plus. She is right there with us. A foreign language teacher!... Academically, David does his homework. He tries to keep up with theory and methods of teaching foreign languages. He is very professional. However, there is a gap between the professional teacher's journals and the classroom. This gap is filled through Michelle. We've all been honest with David. He needs to know this...Now we need to have the right kind of leadership and when we have two departments together, we have to recognize differences. We meet as one huge department and get 'nuts and bolts' information. There is no sharing or communication. The departments have very different personalities. It's like night and day. A compromise to our having our own meetings monthly is to meet separately every other month. We'll get more time for foreign language that way...We can see one department on the brink of some really good changes!...

Morale is good...This is a school with feeling.

Michelle Nelson (foreign languages asst. chair). 10

years experience:

This is my first semester as assistant department chair. I work with teachers on curriculum and instruction issues. I am still unclear about what to do but David and I are working it out. David encourages me to go to workshops and he gets resources for the department and helps with their stating of objectives. I help with texts and materials as well as scope and sequence of instruction. I am important as a communicator to David of department needs, problems, and assignments for next year, especially since I am in the office and he is not. We meet once a week to discuss the department issues. I brainstorm with the department. Another teacher and I will be presenting a workshop next week for our colleagues. We will follow up with peer coaching to see how the teachers enjoy the new ideas. Next year we plan to have department meetings organized around issues of pedagogy rather than simply announcements and memos which is what happens this year. We will plan meetings according to what the teachers like to do.

Hamilton High Teachers. David Freeman (science). 26

years experience:

As a leader, Bill is amazingly supportive of people. He reinforces the positive things in people. I think people give the most when you open up the freedom to do it. Have a vision! He doesn't have a unified vision for himself. This makes him more tolerant of what evolves...Bill is a great advocate for the department. He gets enormous respect from others, including the

administrators. You hear people talking in the school. He has a long fuse. He doesn't get angry with people. He is relatively patient with kids and very supportive of his teachers. He always goes to bat for his teachers. In disputes with parents or kids, the sense I have is that he does not antagonize parents or kids...He takes parents seriously and is sincere about their concerns. Yet, he does not stay awake at night. He is not getting old in the job....I am amazed at the skill with which he has done the job.

Things have flourished with him...When you talk about what goes on in other departments you realize that others envy our department. We have freedom, sharing, no playing of favorites. Everyone has a chance to be assigned to the best committees. He is concerned about our pocket books and (career) scale movement. In some departments, the chair thinks they are the only ones allowed on scale 5 (Master teacher). Their department meetings are controlled by the department head. In our department, different people plan meetings. Others say our meetings are so interesting. There is a low competitive spirit. All teachers are initially competitive. They all want the kids to love you. Often there is not a lot of sharing. It is clear to me that the wrong kind of leadership can 'screw it up'.

A disadvantage of the department system is suggested by

David Freeman:

The departmental structure precludes discussion among departments. There are many natural ways to put science and social studies together as well as science and math and the arts. Sadly, and its too bad, three heads of these departments need to get people together. It's disappointing that they are considered outside groups. There are common

problems that our disciplines do not allow us to appreciate.

Ralph Maxwell (science). 33 years experience:

I am excited to be here for another 10 years (before retirement). The district in those 10 years will be demanding. The things the district will allow me to do during that time will keep me functioning near the top of my level of personal satisfaction. I feel that I can make a contribution to something important. People have been supportive. I've been given thanks, gratitude, and concern for burnout. This is important. This is what keeps my interest level high, after 30 years of teaching. Kids see it. They pick up messages through it. It's an attitude.

Edison High Teachers. Paul Johnson (social studies).

17 years experience:

We are treated as professionals. We create the academic objectives. The teachers work together to determine what students need. The 'code' is that they are experienced professionals and that they know what they are supposed to be doing. They know what is important to cover, what to teach...Teachers are encouraged to be positive, fair, and understanding. If a teacher displays problems such as being lax, unusual amounts of discipline problems or yelling in class, the chair would intervene...He is aware of what is happening.

Mike McIntosh (social studies). 11 years experience:

George goes out of his way more than other chairs to have the schedule reflect the teachers' wishes. He listens to us and tries

hard to do what he can for use. We, in turn, are willing to do any job he asks. He is the one person responsible for evaluation. His evaluations go into our permanent record. His perceptions of how I am doing are recorded. Potentially, he has a large impact on our jobs. He oversees the curriculum, makes suggestions for change, and is the director of our curriculum development departmentally. He has a strong influence there yet he gives us autonomy over the curriculum...I am on a school wide technology committee since I am the most experienced with technology. The risk capital report which goes before the board was worked on by me. I was the most likely one to be involved.

This is the most cooperative, enjoyable, rewarding professional group I've been in. We have a sense of common mission. We get a special cooperative effort from everybody. It is a family feeling. We have common goals and common concerns. Professional disagreements are not a primary issue. George tries hard to foster that environment. This department serves the needs of the kids in this department. We try to have the best impact on the kids that we can. The kids feel that we are really concerned about them and their needs. I'm not talking only about academics and courses, but ethics and values...We understand the social structure around here and like to think that we have an edge. We want to create a positive social environment. We like people! We are intelligent people, cooperative despite cultural diversity and variety. The quality of job life here is good.

Lincoln High Teachers. Nate Albright (English). 29

years experience:

Peg sets the atmosphere of the department. This is an enjoyable department to work in or its not! When I first came, it

was not enjoyable. We had a tyrannical chair. When you walked in you could feel the atmosphere.

Donna Brown (English). 12 years experience:

Peg has a genuine caring for people which reflects Carl's influence. People are important. This is what the administration respects. I am grateful to be part of the decision-making in hiring new people. I voiced my appreciation to be allowed to have input into this. You are recognized as being important. You are comfortable with these people. You realize that they are taking care of your needs. We also have input into the scheduling of classes. We feel part of the process.

Chairs represent their departments to a hierarchy of administrators. They also represent administrative ideas and policies to their own departments. They are "middle management" and as such they try to please both groups. The ability of the chair to satisfy both will be a strong measure of his or her success and an instructional leader in the school. Below are comments from administrators and teachers which give evidence of the chairs' role as a middle manager. The principals and other administrators use the chair as both an informant of faculty views as well as a channel of communication for implementation administrative policies.

4. CHAIRS AS LINKS OR BRIDGES BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHERS

Jefferson High. Cynthia Schulman, associate principal:

Chairs represent the building and the district to the teachers. They must be key players. They must be communicators. They must have credibility as teachers. They are treated as teaching colleagues/administrators. But, the chair is also a member of a teaching team. People say that it is the best job in the world. I was content to be a chair until the other administrative job came along."

"We use chairs at the principal's level in a joint meeting. We ask the chairs for feedback when we want to try out new ideas. It is interesting to hear them talk with each other. They are good sounding boards. It's part of the school culture. We wonder what will be their reaction."

"The lines between teachers and administrators here are not strong... People here have respect for one another... We have never had to 'riff' a teacher even during declining enrollment. We have a commitment to people. The good news is that they sky is the limit. The bad news is that it is hard to restrain oneself. You can't jump into everything."

The most frequent descriptors of department chairs at each school were: "facilitator", "expediter", "liaison to the administration", buffer, supporter, and "resource person". The teachers emphasized the task of the chair as that of "making their jobs easier". However, they did not

overlook the more difficult aspects of the impact that chairs had on their professional lives:

Louise Abano (social studies), 27 years experience:

They have the power of God over the teacher," says Louise Abano, teacher of history at Jefferson High for 27 years and a senior member of the department. The chair determines whether you keep your job, the pecking order within the department, betterment of teachers in terms of money, station, job security. Chairs have a strong influence over other administrators, including the principal. They are 'people in the middle', not welcome in either group. They generally have better people skills and they demonstrate efficiency in budget planning over time. They meet crises year by year. They have to prove themselves fast - within 2-3 years. There are tremendous changes in chairs over the years. It is a fluid position.

Louise describes the role of the chair as "expediter".

The chair carries out policies of the board and administration as effectively as possible. From the teaching staff perspective, the chair is a resource person - an expeditor from a different point of view. Whether or not they do it well, they are also disciplinarians and evaluators up and down the line. Resources can be such material things as chalk and supplies. They can also be: time, speakers, and ideas. At one time, chairs did mostly the supply things. Chairs also affect the allocation of teachers and students in the department. Chairs negotiate class size and numbers of staff with the Administrational chair negotiates to bring in a 1/4, 1/2 or 3/4 position.

Department chairs serve and facilitate. They also exercise leadership and implement

policies. Here, they leave you alone to do your thing. They stay out of your way because they assume you're professional. The more 'clout' they have, the more 'clout' you have. A previous chair was a buffer against a former principal who was dismissed 3 years after he came. She took care of us. She displayed superior leadership. Our department was less divided, less trouble.

Michelle Nelson (foreign languages). 10 years

experience:

The role of the department chair is to be an advocate as a teacher to the administration. This can be important in areas of class size as well as the faculty bathrooms!

Hamilton High. Lucia Bradley. principal:

I depend on the chairs. They are the voice for their department on academic issues, moral issues, concerns, frustrations; people sometimes feel that they are victims. If a decision is to be made here, I depend on their perceived wisdom. It is foolhardy to send a directive from on high. The chair must be candid when I ask: 'how do I respond'? He or she must be supportive." Chairs channel and filter information to me.

Formerly, we met in a big circle. That doesn't fit the way I operate. I like interaction. I prefer supportive, smaller environments. I arrange clusters of three chairs with whom I meet twice a month. This is relaxed communication...I run an idea by them such as the censorship issue. They see the difficulty. It can embarrass all of us. I bounce ideas about how to operate. They are a sounding board. They are closer to the teachers than the administrative team. We don't work with the faculty as they do. I trust some department to give me straight

answers. They appreciate the way I approach a problem with them. It's not the usual line/staff relationship. It is more like a web. I am the spider and I am connected by a web to a variety of people. I want to demonstrate to the department system that I can be inclusive and collegial. This is true of many areas: budgeting, staffing, scheduling, other policies...I see the principal as the visionary. She is at the top of the mountain for the 'vision.

Edison High. Richard White. principal:

Department chairs have the most important job in the school because of what they control: communication. What I say and feel are interpreted to their teachers by them. They can engage in selective screening. Even their tone can convey meaning. I know which ones are loyal and which ones aren't. I know, they know. I must depend on them to know what teachers are saying. Maybe they think that they will look better in my eyes if they say things that aren't true. Sometimes it catches up with them. Teachers come to me directly!

Paul Johnson (social studies). 17 years experience:

It is middle management. There is a lot of autonomy and responsibility. There is a certain amount of independence within the framework of the job. The term "mini-principal" is often used, but it is not exactly that. It is really a "mini-instructional principal". The chair has a lot of control over what is going on in this area. He is the instructional leader for the department. He has impact on people as a leader and as a guide...The chair tries to set or develop a cohesiveness on policy or goals and objectives among the people of the

department. He tries to find some commonality.

You are the filter for the department: they bring concerns to you and you are the advocate. People might accuse me of being parochial but chairs protect not their power but their people. Chairs work to the best of their ability to defend the rights of their staff to do things their way or give them the best possible physical, social, and emotional environment in which to work...In this building, departments are fiefdoms. There is power in the departments. You run up against the chairs and departments in other disciplines who are in isolation. Parochialism exists. There is limited sharing in curriculum issues.

The department chairs have a hard road to walk. They are considered administrators, not negotiators (for teachers). One year the chair from our sister school in the district went out on strike. He was fired as chair and replaced by the president of the teacher's union who was in his department. The chair finally left Bell and came here to Edison to teach.

He intercepts a lot of stuff; he filters and modifies it before he transmits it to us. He makes it palatable so that we do not have an undo amount of stress. Also, scheduling is important; room assignments as well. He decides committee assignment and he determines who teaches what. He decides who will head the world history team, for example. He also decides who is not on certain committees.

It is a job with a unique set of perspectives. Not only is the chair like a principal in an office where he can look out the window, he is like an activities director working with extra curricular activities; he is like a dean working with students on an individual basis. But, he is also a classroom teacher. The job is not static.

By teaching a class, George becomes like us! He deals with kids in areas that cover the whole spectrum of the school. Yet, he is still in the classroom mainstream. This allows him to empathize with the teachers. He understands their viewpoint. He has his feet on both levels of administration and faculty. He can maintain perspective. If he ever became an assistant principal, he would leave the classroom for good. He has to teach a class! George teaches a regular class, not A.P. or honors. He can say, 'I do this in class'. He has methods and ideas to share. He can say, 'I've done this'. He has credibility.

Mike McIntosh (social studies). 11 years experience:

The chair is an intermediary between the Social Studies staff and the upper administration. He intercepts policy from administrators to the department and carries the department concerns to the administration. George is a strong advocate of the department..His advocacy was stronger the first few years I was here. He has acted less forcefully the last couple of years. He does not want to go out in a 'blaze of glory'. He is more conciliatory and more of a consensus former. He looks for the middle ground. He is moderate in a better sense. He is a consensus seeker more than a fence sitter. His greater loyalty is to the department and staff rather than to the administration.

Dick Nelson (social studies). 18 years experience:

The chair is the medium or conduit who gets administrative directives to us and our messages to the administration...He is more than a 'mouthpiece' for the administration. He is a faculty advocate who is trustworthy and diplomatic...He is our curricular conscience. Here he does not lead in the sense that one crams things down a throat.

When he sees a gap, he suggests things that we look at.

As long as there is an 'us and them' attitude we have to have somebody to act as a moderator. If a chair heads two departments, then the necessity of the position depends on the individual. George knows my curriculum. He can request materials vital to what I'm teaching. For evaluation, he knows what I'm doing and can appreciate the way I present it. I wouldn't want a music chair evaluating me. He could look at 'time on task' and classroom management but not the skills I am trying to develop. I would find that distressing...An assistant principal is the worst idea yet. The conduit is lost. It definitely is an 'us and them' situation. It would be horrible. The staff morale would be horrible.

Marty Scholar (25 years experience):

The impact of the chair is that he is a buffer of sorts. He keeps you free from administritivia so that it doesn't drive you nuts. He helps us ignore it if it is unnecessary or eases it through for us. We will deal with the reasonable stuff...May God bless and keep the Czar as far away as possible...He allows us to do our thing. He recognizes that we are professionals.

Lincoln High. Bill Collins, associate principal:

The principalship, as Carl refers to it, consists not only of himself but of the three of us, himself and two associates. The administration perceives division heads as advocates of teachers more than administrators. They are associated with content. You can talk about 'mastery learning' but it is too generalized to be useful. You must see it in the language of the content. That is the value of the

division head. He or she knows how it really works. Visionaries only have their vision!

The heads try to translate administrative policy into what their teachers can understand; they try to understand political problems; they are often frustrated. They need to be trusted by their staff...they are the pipeline to teacher resistance. I expect the division head to give me what the state wants in terms of tests; to give me personnel information for either central (the central office) or the state; to personally give me time to move out of central into school by helping supervise activities; to be responsible for primary communication to the staff of administrative information.

Donna Brown (English). 12 years experience:

Chairs also act as intermediaries between the higher administration and the teachers. The chair deals with immediate problems. Her knowledge and skills determine what is important and what is not important to go to the higher-ups! This comes with experience.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative study of four high school department chairs suggests that these chairs are the primary instructional leaders of their academic disciplines or departments. While they are given considerable responsibility by their job descriptions, the chairs are assisted in their instructional leadership by others such as principals, assistant and associate principals, assistant

superintendents, superintendents, and teachers. They receive support and considerable autonomy from administrators, especially principals who rely on their expertise as academicians and communicators.

Their position is also assisted by trust and credibility from their followers, the department members who see them as effective teachers, managers, and friends. Chairs can make teachers' jobs easier by facilitating arrangements to satisfy classroom needs, more stimulating by encouraging professional growth opportunities, and more rewarding by giving commendations, trust, and support.

However, the chairs' ability to delegate leadership opportunities to members of their departments and to utilize talents and interests of teachers in the spirit and practice of collegiality noticeably enhances teacher followership. "We are treated as professionals" was a common statement among department members. Teachers' leadership roles were evident both within the departments and throughout the school. This was attributed by teachers to the encouragement of both the chairs in the study and their administrators.

The chairs' role as a "middle manager" was evident throughout the comments from administrators and teachers. This task was assisted by their ability to excel as "facilitators", "buffers", "conduits", "pipelines", and "intermediaries" between the administration and the department. By perceiving the visions and needs of both administrators and teachers and by communicating and interpreting information between both groups, these chairs were able to bridge or link two different but related bodies in the "loosely coupled" systems of their high school environments.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Perceptions of high school department chairs as instructional leaders may exist elsewhere in school environments similar or different from those described in this study. Further inquiry about the job responsibilities of other high school chairs in other schools and how those chairs are perceived and supported by administrators and teachers elsewhere is necessary to further substantiate the conclusions of this study in other settings.

Consideration of how the chairs in this study are able to carry out their responsibilities with limited formal authority will add another dimension to the complexity of

the instructional leadership role of these high school chairs. How chairs obtain cooperation from teachers and administrators, how they develop cohesiveness within the departments, and what strategies are most useful in building a sense of community within their departments and their schools will be subjects of further investigation.

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